

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY	Czechoslovakia	REPORT	
SUBJECT	Military Barracks and Training of Paratroops in Presov	DATE DISTR.	5 January 1955
DATE OF INFO.		NO. OF PAGES	4
PLACE ACQUIRED		REQUIREMENT NO.	RD
		REFERENCES	

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This is UNEVALUATED
 Information

THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.
 THE APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.
 (FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

1. The paratroops barracks in Presov (N 49-00, E 21-15) are situated on the southern edge of the town, near the main railroad station. The building is rather old and is on the east side of the main street, the continuation of Kosicka silnice (Kosice Road). The north side of the barracks is bordered by a street which runs parallel with the Presov - Nizni Sebastova (Sebes) railroad line. This street ends at the garrison hospital and administration building.
2. Buildings:
 - a. The barracks extending along the main street about 120 meters consists of a long, two-story, rather old building.
 - b. On the street leading to the hospital, a new, one-story building with a reinforced concrete basement, 20 x 30 meters, has been put up on the north corner of the old building. This building will probably be used as a storage area.
 - c. Another line of one-story buildings extends along this street as far as the garrison administration.
 - d. The barracks yard extends up to the garrison administration building. Because of its size, this yard is used as a training field for the ground training of paratroops.
 - e. Construction of new barracks, probably for paratroops, was begun in spring 1953 on the northwestern edge of the town, on the west side of the Torysa River.
3. Recruits for the paratroops are selected from candidates with the following qualifications:
 - a. Category A - physical fitness without the slightest physical defect.

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- b. Medium or small build and weight.
 - c. Good cadre reports.
4. After ordinary drill training, which consists of physical training, jiu-jitsu, boxing, wrestling, climbing, running, jumping, there follows training on a so-called paratroops' ground track. The paratroops' ground track is built right inside the barracks opposite the railroad freight yard. There are towers for practice jumps into canvas or sand, low and high bars, level and sloping bars, vertical, horizontal and oblique ropes, obstacles with barbed wire for crawling under and jumping into the wire, solid walls for jumping and climbing and swings, where the parachutist gets accustomed to the shock of the opening of the parachute and subsequent swinging of the body. Points are given for all training, and when a certain number of points has been attained, the recruit proceeds to the next phase of training. Basic military training with arms is co-ordinated with progressive training in jumping.
 5. Training with arms is carried on in the barracks, mostly with the 9 mm. sub-machine gun with folding butt. There is also training with light machine guns. Paratroops are also equipped with a certain kind of flamethrower, a weapon like a submachine gun carried by means of a band around the neck, and with a four-cornered, oblong knapsack on the back, from the top of which two semicircles project. Another weapon is a Czech automatic 9 mm. pistol, which was issued to units in July 1953. The ammunition for the submachine guns and pistols is identical. The paratroops are also trained in the use of mortars and small cannon.
 6. All paratroops are trained to ride motorcycles and drive all types of cars. Recently specially fitted vehicles, Tatra or Praga RN, have been used for the paratroops.¹ These vehicles usually have four-wheel drive and a higher chassis than ordinary cars. The motorcycles used are mostly Jawa 250 and 350. Heavier types of Soviet motorcycles, copies of the German BMW, are also used. These motorcycles are fitted with sidecars, and they also have a driveshaft. The sidecars are fitted for the installation of light machine guns.
 7. Political indoctrination is the same for the paratroops as for other formations, twice a week for about two or three hours. A special military manual has been published for political instruction, containing all the subjects to be studied. Apart from political instruction, there is the so-called mass work, done mostly in study circles, and newspaper reading. In intervals for recreation, there are 10-minute lectures on articles from the newspapers or the periodical Nase Vojsko (Our Army). A soldier's training is evaluated according to his attitude towards political indoctrination, and the way he takes part in the political and mass activity. Cases are possible where a soldier who has given evidence of definite weakness on the physical side of military training, but who has come through very well in political instruction, is left in the unit and may, after being sent to higher political courses, become a political worker in the unit.
 8. Paratroop training on Presov airfield alternates and sometimes is combined with air training for students of the Air Force school.
 9. The airfield presently serves the following uses:
 - a. Air base and training base for paratroops;
 - b. Air base and airfield of the Air Force school at Presov;
 - c. Civilian airfield for Czechoslovak Airlines (CSA);
 - d. Airfield for the Presov Aeroklub and glider section of the Svazarm (Union for Cooperation with the Army);
 - e. Temporary air base for the Kosice Air Police.

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10. The paratroop unit has at its disposal at least two Dakotas. [redacted] aircraft for training are used alternately. [redacted] The sides and top of the aircraft are painted green and the bottom part either blue-green or light blue.
11. Jumps are performed in groups, usually of about 20 men, either actually over the airfield or in the Isla area. Jumps are carried out from heights of 400 - 800 meters. Jumps are carried out, weather permitting, every day.
12. The uniform for jumping consists of lace-up half-boots with sewn-on buckles and thick stamped rubber soles. Camouflage, or, less frequently, khaki trousers are worn, also a waterproof camouflage tunic with fastening in the middle, or a parachutist's tunic with a larger number of pockets and a parachutist's helmet with ear flaps. The helmet fastens under the chin.
13. Usually white combat parachutes which fasten on the back are used, with smaller auxiliary parachutes on the chest. In addition to those parachutes, colored parachutes of rectangular shape are used also, mainly for practice dropping of equipment and arms from low altitudes. Motorcycles are dropped by two white parachutes.
14. Before jumping from aircraft, the paratroops practice jumps from a balloon, which is permanently moored in a small wood south of the airfield and the village of Inhotice (formerly Kelemes - N 49-01, E 21-17). The balloon has a basket which holds three people and the height of the balloon is regulated by a rope. The rope is wound on a winch installed on a special truck. The balloon is cigar-shaped.
15. In the western part of the airfield, an area into which individual jumps are made is marked out with white paint. The jumps are carried out from a height of about 300-400 meters from the Dakotas. Apart from these individual jumps, mass jumps are also carried out here. Jumps are made from one aircraft (always a Dakota); or from two aircraft, flying either side by side, or close behind one another; or from four, six, or more aircraft flying in pairs behind one another.
16. From February to October 1953, with an average of 100-150 jumps daily, no one was fatally injured. There were cases of injuries from late opening of parachutes, or landing on a hard road, a hill or a ridge. Late opening of the parachute was caused either by a badly folded parachute or by failure to carry out regulations for jumping. In only one case did the auxiliary parachute burst.
17. Two ambulances were always parked between the old hangar and the new, west hangar. There were also at hand a half-track motorcycle and a half-track Skoda jeep for immediate dispatch to the scene of the accident.
18. Each jump from an aircraft was paid for. In the old currency the pay was 400 crowns per jump, and in the new currency 80 crowns.
19. When the paratroops carried out jumps they carried submachine guns with folding butts. The guns had a straight magazine which was inserted after landing.
20. Jumps into terrain were undertaken by paratroops after carrying out sufficient jumping at the airfield. Such jumps over the terrain were either exploratory jumps by individuals, or group jumps combined with military exercises.
21. In individual exploratory jumps, paratroops were dropped at various distances from the original airfield and their task was to return to the barracks in the shortest possible time. In these exercises the paratroops were allowed to use any means, such as stealing a car or clothes, or attacking a police station to get a motorcycle.
22. For jumps combined with military exercises, the area between the airfield and

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the villages of Kapusany (N 49-03, E 21-20) and Vysna Sebastova (formerly Vysny Sebes) is usually used for the first few times. For larger groups, the area situated north of Presov, bordered on the west by the Presov - Sabinov (N 49-06, E 21-06) state road in the Velky Saris (N 49-03, E 21-12) sector is used. This space extends in an easterly direction and includes the southern promontory of Stras Hill. In this area, which is not closed to civilians, SNB units also carry out training.

Comment: Not further identified by source.

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